



## **BUILDING BETTER TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

### **Executive Summary June 6, 2005**

**PRESENT:** Chair Nora Campos, Vice Chair David Cortese, Councilmember Linda J. LeZotte, Councilmember Forrest Williams

**STAFF:** Jim Webb, Ed Shikada, Bill Hughes, Sharon Landers, Jim Helmer, Hans Larsen, Timm Borden, Kevin O'Conner, Richard Keit, Amit Kothari, Ben Tripousis

The meeting was convened at 1:32 p.m.

#### **a. Expansion and Improvement of Transit and Transportation Systems**

1. Status Report on Transportation Technology Industry Development Opportunities (Transportation) **Deferred to August 8, 2005**
2. Status Report on Downtown Special District Development (Transportation) **Deferred from May 2, 2005**

**Upon a motion by Councilmember Williams, and seconded by Councilmember LeZotte, the Committee accepted the report.**

#### **b. Traffic Relief/Safe Streets**

1. Utility Cabinet Placement and Size Standards (Transportation)

**Upon a motion by Vice Chair Cortese, and seconded by Councilmember LeZotte, the Committee accepted the report.**

2. Status Report on Annual Traffic Calming Report (Transportation)

**Upon a motion by Councilmember LeZotte, and seconded by Councilmember Williams, the Committee accepted the report with direction to staff to return to the September 12, 2005 meeting with an update on the guidelines.**

3. Receive Follow up Report on Red Curbs Standards at Crosswalks in Vicinity of schools (Transportation) – **continued from April 4, 2005 - – TO BE HEARD WITH ITEM B2**

**c. Supporting Smart Growth**

1. No items

**d. Regional Relationships/Funding/Policy**

1. Status Report on Capitol Expressway Relinquishment (Transportation/County Roads Dept)

**Upon a motion by Councilmember Williams, and seconded by Councilmember LeZotte, the Committee accepted the report.**

**e. Oral Petitions**

There were none.

**f. Adjournment**

**The Committee was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.**



Councilmember Nora Campos, Chair  
Building Better Transportation Committee



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### Meeting Report June 6, 2005

PRESENT: Chair Nora Campos, Vice Chair David Cortese, Councilmember Linda J. LeZotte, Councilmember Forrest Williams

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#### a. Expansion and Improvement of Transit and Transportation Systems

1. Status Report on Transportation Technology Industry Development Opportunities (Transportation) **Deferred to August 8, 2005**
2. Status Report on Downtown Special District Development (Transportation) **Deferred from May 2, 2005**

Jim Helmer introduced Sharon Landers, Assistant Executive Director, Redevelopment Agency, and Kevin O'Conner, Deputy Director, Department of Transportation, who gave a brief update of the business district streetscape maintenance including some background, current funding issues, property based improvement district (PBID) activities to date, and a conclusion stating that improving the appearance of the Downtown and Neighborhood Business Districts (NBD's) in the coming years, without an alternate funding source such as a PBID, will be challenging in light of the proposed citywide reductions in streetscape maintenance necessitated by the required budget reductions.

Sharon Landers added that the negative concerning the PBID is that it would take a while to form one and there is a chance we would see a decline in the downtown maintenance. She mentioned that PBID's are being explored in some of the neighborhood business districts and specifically Japantown, Story Road, 13<sup>th</sup> Street and West San Carlos in the redevelopment area and Willow Glen. The Redevelopment Agency (RDA) is working with the redevelopment areas and have selected two consultants, Willow Glen worked with us in the

selection process and is currently negotiating with their own consultant and will be able to report back the findings in the future.

**Upon a motion by Councilmember Williams, and seconded by Councilmember LeZotte, the Committee accepted the report.**

**b. Traffic Relief/Safe Streets**

**1. Utility Cabinet Placement and Size Standards (Transportation)**

Jim Helmer introduced Hans Larsen, Deputy Director, Department of Transportation and Timm Borden, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works for a brief update.

Mr. Larsen began by stating that staff has worked on the signal and utility cabinets for several years, some progress has been made as to where we place the cabinets in the “pedestrian zone”, located off the right of way or within the furniture zone or tree zone, to the degree possible in the downtown we are working to integrate within buildings, place on the minor streets as opposed to the major boulevards that has less of a visual impact. One issue staff has struggle with is to compress the size of the cabinet. Staff has worked with a vendor to make a prototype/hybrid cabinet, results have not been to impressive, the result is a taller cabinet, the overall mass is still quite large. One of the challenges staff faces is we are trying to do more with our traffic signals in terms of video detection, camera monitoring for traffic management and coordination of signals, all of which require new components into the cabinet box, a lot to ask to go into the cabinet. The other challenge is that we feel somewhat alone to move the industry to smaller cabinets.

Staff feels the best opportunity of moving this issue forward is to try and rally support from other partners/cities, and in particular looking at larger cities within California and seeing if we can generate some critical mass of support to try and move towards smaller components and cabinets. Staff will continue to work on this and look for opportunities as they arise.

Timm Borden spoke on the private utility cabinets, in particular, the Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), SBC, and Comcast cable. PG&E has not standardized on above ground cabinets, staff has been meeting with PG&E to discuss placing underground vaults, and to come up with a decision process as to when they can underground vaults at their cost and when the City would need to pay additional to underground. Any private development, when extending utilities for projects, are regulated by an ordinance that states they cannot have any cabinets above ground over 110 cubic feet, so for example a 5x5x5 cabinet not allowed in the public right of way.

Councilmember LeZotte asked staff if they have thought of making the cabinets into pieces of art, like most of the utility boxes in Coronado Island down by San Diego that are painted with a bench next to it, it is very attractive or maybe they can be wrapped like buses.

Mr. Helmer stated that staff has talked to agencies that have various park programs and will be talking to Barbara Goldstein, Public Art Director, about those types of opportunities in the city.

Chair Campos suggested that staff update the Committee on this item on the next workplan.

Vice Chair Cortese asked what the cost to relocate or underground these facilities is? Mr. Helmer replied that a ballpark figure for an easy 6' to 10' move is between \$25 -\$50k and as high as \$150k to tear out the entire infrastructure and pull new wires to another termination point. The original estimates on under grounding made it infeasible along with moisture and visibility issues.

**Upon a motion by Vice Chair Cortese, and seconded by Councilmember LeZotte, the Committee accepted the report.**

2. Status Report on Annual Traffic Calming Report (Transportation)

Chair Campos began by stating that this item will be heard with item B3.

Jim Helmer gave a high level overview of the report and introduced Amit Kothari, Deputy Director, Department of Transportation and Laura Wells for any questions. The City Council approved its most recent Traffic Calming Policy in June 2001. The revised policy was developed with a goal to improve traffic conditions and livability within San José neighborhoods, and to plan and build traffic calming improvements with new developments or projects.

Mr. Helmer offered the Committee members a snap shot of where the Department of Transportation (DOT) is on the 90% goal of on-time service to be reported out on the monthly electronic transmittals. DOT recommends continuing to strive to meet the original goal, and to report out to Council regularly in the CSA/Core Service Reports as to the gap between actual and desired service levels.

Mr. Helmer spoke on the Red Curb Standards, staff indicated to the Committee that staff would work closely with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee anytime school crosswalks guidelines were updated in the future, in addition to coordination with the BBT Committee.

Mr. Glen Wetzel spoke on the no stopping safety area around school crosswalks and submitted to the Committee a printed email sent to Committee Members on 4/28/05 with the Matsumoto PTA Traffic Committee drawings in contrary to the DOT drawings submitted at the April 4, 2005 BBT Committee meeting. Mr. Wetzel also spoke on the guidelines and indicated there were no changes for school crosswalks safety.

Mr. Helmer stated that Mr. Wetzel raises some legitimate points in terms of school safety. Mr. Helmer stated that in terms of pedestrian safety, that staff does everything possible to

ensure the safety of our pedestrians. The reason for guidelines is to have flexibility in the way we deploy our solutions and there are good reasons for having flexibility and having the ability to act quickly when needed and keep less formal.

Vice Chair Cortese stated that the language in the report from the guidelines seems to broad and someone could put any type of a parking restriction and keep it from coming to the Committee for review. Vice Chair Cortese asked if this language really adds any benefits, if there are no uncontrolled school crosswalks that don't have parking restrictions, then what is the point of the language if it is determined that parking restrictions are not required for school crosswalks, is it possible that staff would not require them in an uncontrolled situation?

Mr. Kothari gave an example, if there was a fire hydrant very close to the crosswalk the fire hydrant itself is restricted parking, so staff would install a sign and red curbing.

Vice Chair Cortese stated that would be considered restricted parking. He then stated that the Matsumoto PTA was hoping there would be an analysis and that if the analysis fell short of a standard, which it was suggested 6' fixed and then if not, then staff would come to the Committee and report out why 6' was not achieved. If there is no fixed standard then maybe the statewide standard for stopping distance might be the kind of standard staff could use as a trigger to when there should be further review.

Mr. Helmer stated that generally a 2' or 4' length of red curbing is not installed a minimum of one car length (5') is installed, and often where the red curb or sign will be placed depends on where the pedestrian is first entering traffic, seeing an oncoming car. Again the reason for suggesting guidelines is to have the flexibility to work with schools to install either 1, 2, 3, or all 4 sides of an uncontrolled location. If there were ever a situation where it was decided that no parking restrictions were needed on an uncontrolled crosswalk, staff would work with the school and Council office and report out reasons.

Chair Campos asked staff to send an information memo with more detail of what the true policy is and answer some of the concerns voiced here today to the Committee Members before this item comes back to the Committee, and recommends this item come back on the September 12, 2005 meeting.

Vice Chair Cortese encouraged the Matsumoto PTA to submit specific standard language to staff for consideration and possible alternative language.

Chair Campos asked staff for a list of the 32 schools referenced in the staff report, listed and emailed to her and the other Committee members.

**Upon a motion by Councilmember LeZotte, and seconded by Councilmember Williams, the Committee accepted the report with direction to staff to return to the September 12, 2005 meeting with an update on the guidelines.**



3. Receive Follow up Report on Red Curbs Standards at Crosswalks in Vicinity of schools (Transportation) – **continued from April 4, 2005 - – TO BE HEARD WITH ITEM B2**

**c. Supporting Smart Growth**

1. No items

**d. Regional Relationships/Funding/Policy**

1. Status Report on Capitol Expressway Relinquishment (Transportation/County Roads Dept)

Hans Larsen gave a status update of pursue a relinquishment of Capitol Expressway between Interstate 680 and State Route 87 to the City of San José. Capitol Expressway is proposed to convert from an auto oriented, high speed expressway to a multi-modal boulevard with light rail transit services, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and landscaping. The converted expressway is not consistent with the design standards used by the County for their expressway system. As a result, the Capitol Expressway has been proposed for relinquishment from the County to the City to be used more as an arterial street. DOT staff continues to discuss the identification of a specified date for final relinquishment with the County in an effort to finalize the agreement and expedite its adoption. DOT staff will work to craft a relinquishment agreement that meets San José's needs and accommodates the County's interests as well. DOT staff will present the full agreement to the City Council upon completion of negotiations with the County.

**Upon a motion by Councilmember Williams, and seconded by Councilmember LeZotte, the Committee accepted the report.**

**e. Oral Petitions**

There were none.

**f. Adjournment**

**The Committee was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.**



Councilmember Nora Campos, Chair  
Building Better Transportation Committee